

Noted  
JSE

8 July 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General

SUBJECT : State Department Study on Overseas Adjustment Problems

1. The attached report represents only a preliminary survey of the problems of personnel adjusting to overseas assignments. It was passed to me informally by a member of the staff that prepared it. While a copy has probably been received by the Medical Staff, I thought you might find it interesting.

2. Being only a preliminary survey the report is suggestive rather than definitive. A summary of some of the more interesting conclusions is below:

a. There is a higher incidence of crackups in the first three years of overseas service. Presumably this is the period during which difficult adjustments have to be made. From then on things seem to ride along until after a total of nine years overseas service. After that the failure rate increases again.

b. The largest number of casualties appears to occur between the ages of 30 and 50. For the 40-44 age period there is a markedly higher rate of crackups.


c. Hardship posts do not have an unusually high casualty rate. Presumably their challenge is subject to easy translation into a sense of tangible achievement, which offsets some of the disadvantages.

d. Clerical employees had more difficulties than did the officers, raising the question of job satisfaction. The person who passed the paper to me observed that the morale at small posts was better than at the larger ones where the clerical employee is more likely to become a cipher. On the EE survey we observed this phenomenon at Frankfurt where, despite all the material luxuries, there was marked dissatisfaction.

e. It is interesting to note that there is no substantial difference between State and USIA casualty rates, despite the fact that USIA has a psychiatric and psychological screening for all applicants for overseas posts. The State Department does not. It is possible that the Foreign Service selection procedure is sufficiently tough to serve as a pretty satisfactory screening mechanism by itself.

f. Europe and the Far East had the highest number of most serious casualties.

3. As the Medical Staff already has a copy of this, the only purpose this may serve you is one of information. However, should the Department conduct further studies, I should think that there is a great deal that we could get out of the exercise. I understand that our last participation was fairly passive.

  
S. D. Breckinridge

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MEMORANDUM FOR: FILE - Overseas Adjustment  
Problems

Copy of 16 July 1963 memo for Inspector General,  
subject "State Department Study on Overseas  
Adjustment Problems" re conversation with  
[REDACTED] is in Mr. Breckinridge's 1963  
Chrono File.

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(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101  
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.